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JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with article 9, paragraph 2, of the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the work programme of the Unit for 1993 and beyond.

* A/48/50.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The following work programme was drawn up in accordance with article 9, paragraph 1, of the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), contained in the annex to General Assembly resolution 31/192 of 22 December 1976, and takes into account the guidelines laid out in Assembly resolutions 42/218 of 21 December 1987, 43/221 of 21 December 1988, 44/184 of 19 December 1989, 45/237 of 21 December 1990, and decision 46/446 of 20 December 1991 and resolution 47/201 of 22 December 1992. The work programme is divided into two sections: section I lists the Unit's work programme for 1993, and section II indicates those studies which the Unit contemplates undertaking after the current year. As hitherto, the work programme is subject to change in the course of the year; new studies may be added; planned studies may be modified, postponed or cancelled, when circumstances warrant; and titles may be changed to reflect the new thrust of studies.

II. WORK PROGRAMME FOR 1993

A. Studies on management, programme and policy issues

1. Review of staffing of the United Nations peace-keeping and related missions (civilian component)

2. The United Nations General Assembly has repeatedly emphasized that peace-keeping operations should be carried out in the most efficient and economical manner. It also recognized that as a result of the recent expansion in peace-keeping activities, an absorptive capacity in respect of trained and experienced United Nations staff members ... is no longer available. In its resolution 47/218 of 23 December 1992 on administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peace-keeping operations, the General Assembly invited the Secretary-General to continue to strengthen and reform the Secretariat units dealing with peace-keeping operations. Having in mind the above concerns of Member States, the JIU intends to analyse relevant recruitment policies and practices, adequacy of training, conditions of service relating to missions, modalities of contractual arrangements for those who are sent on United Nations missions by Governments, and involvement of regional intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations. Finally, JIU will study how Headquarters' structures could be strengthened to deal effectively and efficiently with peace-keeping operations from their planning stage to termination.

2. Assessment of accountability and oversight processes in the United Nations system

3. Many units throughout the United Nations system, most of which are quite small, are concerned with accountability for the use of resources entrusted to secretariats, as well as with internal and external oversight of programme implementation and management. There has been new interest in the efficacy of those units, as shown most recently by General Assembly decision 47/454 of 23 December 1992, but a systematic assessment of all those bodies has never been

made. In this study, the JIU will make an inventory of accountability and oversight processes and units in the system, and then assess patterns, trends, successes and problems. The Inspectors will also highlight promising approaches that can help to enhance those efforts and thereby strengthen the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which the organizations' programmes are carried out.

3. Communications in the United Nations system

4. The JIU issued reports on this topic in 1972 and 1982. 1/ A third report seems very timely, since there have been tremendous advances and changes in communication technology during the last decade which are of particular importance to the increasingly far-flung operational programmes of the system. The study will consider the technological status of communications in the agencies, the substantive area of communications per se and its relationships to the organizations' programmes and priorities for the 1990s, and inter-agency arrangements and possibilities in those areas.

4. Review and strengthening of the relevant sections of the relationship agreement concluded between the United Nations and the specialized agencies relating to the common system of salaries, allowances and conditions of service

5. In accordance with paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 46/191 B of 31 July 1992 relating to the United Nations common system, the study will review the operation and effectiveness of the various relationship agreements concluded between the United Nations and member organizations of the common system. It seems to identify issues and problems that have arisen over the years (since 1948), and to propose corrective measures to enhance comparability and stricter adherence to the goals and objectives of the common system, in order to maximize the benefits deriving therefrom.

5. Contributions of the United Nations system to the economic, social and political advancement of women: An assessment of progress and prospects

6. The United Nations system has devoted considerable efforts to advancing the status of women following world conferences on this subject in 1975, 1980 and 1985. As preparations are made for the Fourth World Conference in 1995, this JIU study will address, among others, some key aspects of progress made and future opportunities. In particular, it will examine the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women 2/ and the utilization of those strategies in the programmes of the agencies and the adequacy of mechanisms and linkages among these programmes and activities. In addition, it will look into the prospects of linking the system's programmes for women more closely to other priority economic and social issues of the 1990s.

6. Restructuring of the United Nations economic and social sectors: regional economic commissions

7. General Assembly resolution 32/197 of 20 December 1977, usually known as the "restructuring resolution", set out new leadership and operational roles for the regional commissions, but it was implemented only to a minimal extent. The role of regional commissions in team leadership and coordination has been more ancillary than leading. This study will analyse the experience of past restructuring efforts and will suggest ways to strengthen regional commissions effectively to enable them to respond better to the needs of their respective regions and the economic and social agenda of the United Nations for the 1990s.

7. Decentralization in the World Health Organization

8. This study will follow upon the JIU report on "Decentralization of organizations within the United Nations system" (JIU/REP/92/6). It will assess the functioning and effectiveness of the decentralized model of WHO in the context of its present global challenges, with special emphasis on constitutional and management issues and the distribution of responsibilities, functions and resources between Headquarters and the regional organizations. Additionally, the study will be an external input to the review by the Executive Board of WHO of the report of its Working Group on the response to global change of WHO.

B. Development cooperation

1. Working with non-governmental organizations: Operational activities for development of the United Nations system with non-governmental organizations and Governments at the grass-roots and national levels

9. Governing bodies have recently called on the development activities of the United Nations system to give high priority to human resources, popular participation, institution-building, and the alleviation of poverty at the field level, where thousands of development non-governmental organizations are already very active. The organizations of the United Nations system and Governments have not generally worked closely with those non-governmental organizations in the past, and they each have considerably different development perspectives and experience. The new development policies, however, indicate that more active collaboration between those three groups could help to advance significantly international economic and social development. This study is an initial exploration of opportunities and problems involved in greater collaboration at the all-important field level, at other organization levels in support of field activities and in specific operational and managerial processes.

2. A review of the specific development needs of small Member States and the responsiveness of the United Nations development system in meeting those needs

10. The number of Member States with relatively small populations has been increasing in recent years at the same time as the international environment for economic development has been deteriorating. This study will examine the development needs that are specific to small countries and will assess how responsive the United Nations development system has been to those needs. On the basis of that assessment, the study will recommend ways of enhancing the United Nations capacity to assist the economic development of small Member States, particularly as regards the development of their human resources.

3. Technology transfer and the United Nations system

11. In an increasingly technical world, the transfer of technology from the developed to the developing world is recognized as crucial to the transformation of the economies of the lesser developed countries. The present study would aim at assessing existing capacities within the United Nations system - institutional, financial, managerial - to deal with the transfer of technology.

4. Technical cooperation among developing countries in Latin America and the Caribbean

12. This study, which has been requested by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will review the level of support provided by organizations of the United Nations system, and UNDP more particularly, to the efforts of Latin American and Caribbean Member States to foster collective self-reliance through various mechanisms for technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC). The study will draw lessons of experience that could be of benefit to other developing regions within the framework of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, adopted in 1978 by Member States, and reaffirmed in 1989 by the General Assembly as the framework for the United Nations system's activities in this area. The report will also serve as a follow-up to an earlier report by the Unit evaluating the contribution of the United Nations system to the implementation of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for TCDC (JIU/REP/85/3).

5. Sharing of common premises and services at the field level by United Nations system organizations

13. This study, which was also requested by the United Nations Development Programme, responds to General Assembly resolution 42/196 of 11 December 1987, in which the Assembly, in section IV, paragraph 24, invites "the governing bodies of organizations of the system to review and rationalize their field structure to enhance cooperation, coherence and efficiency through, inter alia, increased sharing of facilities and services". The study will review the progress already made in this area by United Nations bodies of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and WFP) and assess the

prospects and constraints for increased participation of the specialized agencies in common premises and services at the field level.

III. INDICATIVE DIRECTIONS OF THE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 1994-1995 AND BEYOND

14. As foreshadowed in its annual report for 1991, the Joint Inspection Unit has been working to develop "a more comprehensive work-programming framework and strategy". 3/ In this it has been greatly assisted by the advent of five new Inspectors in January 1993, who have contributed fresh insights and innovative ideas to the planning process. Although the Unit must, and will, continue to be responsive to problems of urgency which arise during the course of the year, but are not contemplated in either the current or the longer-range work programme (as, for example, the peace-keeping note of October 1992 or the report on field representation (JIU/REP/92/8)), it believes it important to indicate the direction its work programme should be taking. By so doing, it will not only give greater coherence to the annual work programmes, but should also encourage timely feedback from Member States and participating organizations.

15. There are presently five principal (albeit overlapping) areas of concentration envisaged for JIU work programmes for 1994-1995 and beyond:

(a) Evaluation. As noted in its 1991 and 1992 annual reports, the Unit has had a long and productive history of accomplishment in the development of evaluation methodology and the encouragement of internal evaluation throughout the United Nations system. Recently, the Unit changed its focus in the direction of in-depth studies of management systems in operation and programme performance and results (for example, reports on United Nations system cooperation with multilateral financial institutions and on the technical cooperation programme of the International Civil Aviation Organization). This new programme has been continued in this year's work programme (for example, reports on technology transfer activities of the United Nations system and on oversight in the United Nations system), as well as the forthcoming expert's report on ways to enhance the Unit's ability to generate cost savings. Among the topics under active consideration for future years are the following:

(i) Impact of the new support cost arrangements of the United Nations Development Programme (proposed by FAO and the United Nations);

(ii) Assessment of printing arrangements within the United Nations system (proposed by FAO);

(iii) Assessment of the effectiveness of internal audit units in the United Nations system (generated internally).

(b) Peace-keeping. Following on its 1992 note on peace-keeping and its current study of non-military staffing of peace-keeping missions, the Unit has the following topics in this rapidly expanding area under active consideration for future years:

(i) Collection of peace-keeping arrears (generated internally);

(ii) Planning and management of peace-keeping operations (proposed by the United Nations);

(iii) Sharing peace-keeping responsibilities: the United Nations and regional organizations (generated internally).

(c) Humanitarian issues. Proceeding from its earlier studies of the mid-1980s on humanitarian programmes, the Unit is actively considering updated reports in this area (for example, UNHCR, UNRWA), as well as the role of the Economic Commission for Africa in managing emergency, humanitarian and rehabilitation activities (proposed by the United Nations).

(d) Management, budgetary and administrative issues. As requested by the General Assembly of the United Nations, the Unit has been devoting increasing attention to these matters over the past few years. Under active consideration for the future are the following topics:

(i) A review of records systems in the United Nations system (proposed and reiterated by FAO);

(ii) A system-wide study on the lapse factor (methods employed to adjust for staff turnover and delays in recruitment) (proposed by UNESCO);

(iii) A comparative review of medical coverage schemes within the United Nations system (proposed by FAO);

(iv) Comparative review of the terms of reference, modalities for operation and size of the Working Capital Funds in the organizations of the United Nations system (proposed by the United Nations);

(v) Comparative review of staff compensation plans in the United Nations system (proposed and reiterated by FAO).

(e) Coordination and cooperation (especially in the field of development). Building on previous and current coordination studies (for example, cooperation with multilateral financial institutions and the forthcoming report on United Nations system cooperation with non-governmental organizations), the following topics are under active consideration for the future:

(i) Relationship between the funding agencies of the United Nations system and the United Nations Secretariat, particularly the regional commissions (proposed by ECLAC);

(ii) The effectiveness of assistance and technical backstopping provided by the United Nations development system to United Nations-funded technical advisers in developing countries and countries in transition (generated internally).

Notes

1/ JIU/REP/72/7, transmitted to the General Assembly under the symbol A/9067; and JIU/REP/82/6, transmitted to the Assembly under the symbol A/37/372.

2/ Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 July 1985 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. I, sect. A.

3/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 34 (A/46/34), para. 23.